

## [Steamboating]

W9666

Beliefs and customs — Sketches

Accession no.

Date received

10/10/40

Consignment no.

1

Shipped from

Wash. Office

Label

Amount 5p.

(incl. forms

C-D.)

WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Form [md] 3

Folklore Collection (or Type)

## Library of Congress

Title Steamboating

Place of origin Oregon Date 3/27/39

Project worker Manly M. Banister

Project editor

Remarks Entitles "Steamboats" on forms C and  
D.

Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date March 27, 1939

Address 2071 SW Park Avenue

Subject Steamboating

Name and address of informant Captain Milton Smith

3051 NE 38th Avenue

Date and time of interview March 27th A.M.

## Library of Congress

Place of interview Captain Smith's home

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Howard Corning

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Captain Smith's home is located just below the crest of the hill in the Alameda District, on the very fringe of the bon-ton residential area. The house is a nice one and new, and while I was there, interior decorators were busily at work, which necessitated conducting the interview in the breakfast nook, the only place not cluttered with workmen and their paraphernalia.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date March 27, 1939

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Subject Steamboating

Name and address of informant Captain Milton Smith

## Library of Congress

3051 NE 38th Avenue

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
  2. Place and date of birth
  3. Family
  4. Places lived in, with dates
  5. Education, with dates
  6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
  7. Special skills and interests
  8. Community and religious activities
  9. Description of informant
  10. Other points gained in interview
1. Parents, American: father, Joseph Smith, mother, a Hall.
  2. Born at Buena Vista, August 10th, 1874.
  3. Wife and daughter.
  4. Buena Vista, French Prairie, Hobsonville up/ to the age of 22. Then Rainier, Washington. Recently in Portland.
  5. —?

## Library of Congress

6. Steamboat captain and pilot on the Columbia, Willamette, and Cowlitz Rivers.

8. Steamboating.

9. A man who looks much younger than his years. Sturdily built and only slightly grey. Memory on the faulty side.

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date March 27, 1939

Address 2071 SW Park

Subject Steamboats

Name and address of informant Captain Milton Smith

3051 NE 38th Avenue

Text: I am the youngest of the Joseph Smith family of nine children. My father and my mother crossed the plains in '46 and '47 respectively. They met and were married at Buena Vista, and settled in the French Prairie region near Woodburn. When I was about a year old, they moved to Buena Vista, and then to Hobsonville near Tillamook. Father was not one of the founders, because Hobsonville was a thriving place when we got there.

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He built and operated a sawmill at Hobsonville, and later moved to Rainier, Washington, where he built another sawmill and operated it until his death.

About that time I came into the picture—when I was twenty-two. I started into the steamboat game, building and operating tugboats. I retired about five years ago. We operated under the name of the Columbia and Cowlitz Transportation Company. Then the name was changed to the Smith Transportation Company. I finally sold out and it became the Shaver Transportation Company, which went out of business about two years ago.

My mother was a Hall, and she came in a different wagon train from that of my father. I remember having heard her tell that her sister was married to a man named Croisan, during the trip across the plains. While they were asleep in their wagon on their wedding night, some men came and 2 played a practical joke on them. They pushed the wagon out into the river near which they were camped until the water came up into the bed of the wagon.

My father had the distinction of setting up and operating the first threshing machine in Oregon. It was run by horse-power and not steam. I forget who it was made for, but it wasn't Croisan.

Oregon had its first entry in 1913 at Chicago, in the international speedboat races. It wasn't the first speedboat built in Oregon, but it was the first one built here that took the world's record for speeds. We made fifty miles an hour with it, and that became the record at that time. It's name was the "Oregon Kid".

Yes, I used to know Charlie Fuller. He was what we called a "double-header" in those days. That is, he had licenses both as an engineer and as a steamboat captain. At this particular time I recall, Charlie was engineer for me and we were taking a raft of logs down the Cowlitz. The water was high and rough and a chain broke loose. I was running short-handed at the time, for I didn't have a deckhand—a logger who could walk the raft. So I got out there, and I found the chain had dropped loose. There was a piece of rope

## Library of Congress

there and I grabbed that, but I couldn't let go or make it fast to anything. I had to have a chain and I had to have it fast before the raft broke apart. About then I looked up and saw Charlie crawling across the raft, dragging a section of chain after him. He couldn't walk the logs, but he could crawl, and he came out there to me with that chain. That showed he had guts.

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Form D

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date March 27, 1939

Address 2071 SW Park

Subject Steamboats

Name and address of informant Captain Milton Smith

3051 NE 38th Avenue

Comment: Captain Smith could not give me much time, but he is not a particularly good informant. He has the complex to many have: the fear of saying anything personal. Many informants try to make their talk as erudite and cultured as possible. People of this type are difficult to get anything from. When I offered to return at another time, he adequately squelched the proposition, so I believe it would be a waste of time to interview him further.

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However, the Captain recommended that we interview his cousin, Ed Croisan who lives near 52nd at Hawthorne, with a Mrs. Stow. He was once sheriff of Marion County and later Collector of Customs at Portland. Also B. F. (Frank) Hall, the oldest man in Oregon to have an automobile operator's license. He lives at Woodburn, Oregon, and is well known so that he can be found easily.